

ROTC and NDFS Collaboration

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During the fall 2020 semester, students in Utah State University's Advanced Dietetics Practicum course taught members of the Army and Air Force Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC) about the importance of food and nutrition for optimal health and physical performance. Socially distanced or online presentations were successfully given even amid COVID-19 restrictions. During the *Fueling for ROTC* presentation, nutrition and dietetics students taught cadets the basics of how to properly fuel their bodies for ROTC training and other workouts. Additional live, online presentations were provided at the Air Force ROTC's request, including *Eating Healthy on a Budget* and a *Cooking Healthy on a Budget* demonstration. Interested cadets could also take part in nutrition counseling sessions that were conducted by NDFS students, and supervised by a registered dietitian nutritionist.

It wasn't just the ROTC cadets who benefitted from the collaboration. The nutrition and dietetics students gained experience with leadership skills as they worked together to plan and create the presentations, important preparation for their future careers.

Katie Brown, assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences (NDFS), said the collaboration provided "...NDFS students with valuable supervised practice experience with developing and delivering nutrition education in group settings, as well as practice with individualized nutrition counseling."

The ROTC participants recognize the benefits that nutrition programming adds in promoting optimal health and performance among cadets. "As a soldier, the physical demand on our body is extremely taxing," said Dallas Abrams of the Army ROTC, "The more educated we are on how we can take care of our bodies, the longer and better the most important resource the Army has will perform at the highest level"

Air Force ROTC cadet leader Jacob Ogden highlighted that the knowledge gained from the presentation is "something we can pass on to other cadets in the future as well." The basic nutrition knowledge the NDFS students gave the ROTC community may influence the training of future cadets, and may even benefit the soldiers that the cadets will lead once they are officers.